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ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to assist open education advocates in seriously defending their commitments to humanistic or open education. The first section defines the term "open education" and traces its background. The remainder of the article is an attempt to generate principles to guide and defend open education as a viable alternative. Several areas of philosophy are used as categories within which assumptions basic to open education are developed. Historical and philosophical roots of current writing on open education are explored. A number of conclusions are offered as part of a theory for open education. The concluding section is in the form of a dialogue further attempting to explain open education. An extensive bibliography is provided. (Author/MLF)

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TOWARD, TOWARD A THEORY FOR OPEN EDUCATION

DEFENDING OPEN EDUCATION IN THE MIDST OF ACCOUNTABILITY PRESSURES

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In this day of pressures for educational accountability many school administrators, curriculum developers, and teachers wish to sustain and defend a commitment to humanistic or open education. Nevertheless, they are beset by pressures to create performance objectives, skills management systems, and the like to provide structured responses to accountability mandates. These kinds of responses are often seen as running counter to open education sentiments. As a result, many proponents of open education see no way to defend their position. Hence, they adopt a new posture, one of relinquishment, and cease to advocate what they hold dear.

This article is offered as an attempt to assist open education advocates in seriously defending their commitments. By drawing upon historical precedent in the long tradition of humanistic educators and by utilizing philosophical discourse, those who favor the spirit of open education can be accountable. They can pursue and defend their efforts at least as competently as those who use performance objectives, standardized test scores, and other perportedly objective accountability technology to support curricula of highly cognitive information-laden and "back-to-basics" orientations.

In providing a basis for accountability in open education we must begin by characterizing the label itself, a term that is open to considerable controversy.

Initial Considerations

Let us characterize open education as an open decision making system that finds its substance in situations, not generalities. It is not to be equated with open-space architecture or even a special set of pedagogical

strategies and organizational patterns. Surely it can be characterized descriptively according to observable attributes (Bussis and Chittenden, 1970 and Walberg and Thomas, 1971) that are common to extant practice. As useful as these descriptive treatments may be, the etiology of such attributes needs to be sought. Spodek (Spodek and Welberg, 1975, pp. 9-10) used a Chomskyan metaphor to convey this message. Beyond the observable attributes (surface structure) lies a value complex (deep structure). The remainder of this article is an attempt to explicate the kind of value complex or normative theoretical framework from which open education emerges. Such explication is the root of accountable defensibility.

A Case for a Normative Theory

Which is most beneficial, a theory that is normative (i.e., attempts to delineate, justify and prescribe what ought to be the course of open education), or a theory which describes (i.e., attempts to observe a set of phenomena and provides an explanation which elucidates the bases upon which those phenomena exists)? Should the two be seen in opposition or in isolation from one another, or should they be viewed as contributors to one another? Let us begin by looking at the descriptive and then move to the normative.

Most descriptive treatments of open education can be traced to the work of Walberg and Thomas (1971), Rathbone (1970), Barth (1972), Silberman (1973), etc. One might attempt to reduce the sets of characteristics presented to a few basic assumptions. This author attempted to do this, but in doing so found himself teleologically asking, "What is the ideological source of this or that practice described, e.g. Where

did Walberg and Thomas (1971) obtain their framework? It was largely from observation and the Bussis and Chittenden delineation of principles (1970). Where did Bussis and Chittenden obtain their ten principles? It was largely from observing open education at Educational Development Center at Newton, Massachusetts. Did the E.D.C. arrive at the ideas a priori? No, they were formulated largely from a study of the British primary school models. British primary roots can be traced to the MacMillan sisters, and to Dewey and the progressive education movement in the United States and continental Europe. Dewey and Margaret MacMillan can be traced to several eminent European and American philosophers and psychologists. Roots of the MacMillan sisters can be traced to Seguin, the Fabianists, Carlyle, Kingsley, Spencer, Ruskin, Ribot, Tolstoy, Herbart, Froebel, Dewey, Hall, and Arnold (Curtis and Boultwood, 1965, 507-512). Roots of Dewey can be traced to James, Peirce, Hall, Morris, Hegel, Mill, Froebel, Herbart, Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Locke, Bacon, and Comenius (Boydston, 1970). These roots have threads akin to the humanist tradition of Vittorino, Erasmus and others of the humanist tradition in the Renaissance. The humanist tradition in education was a revival of Quintilian's Institutes of Oratory, which was in no small measure influenced by his great Athenian predacessors.

Dispite the divergence of roots, commonalities among open educators might better be sought in the process of their decision than in uniformity of products that they produce. Open educators, devoid of a specific founder to rely on for guidance, exemplify their multifarious tradition by engaging in a continual search for "oughts". They are in a continuous quest to improve. They are in search of more than that which fits a label; they seek better

education, whatever the label. Open educators transcend the desire for a recipe ideology which can be laid out descriptively. They seek principles for continuous growth, cornerstones of a value complex. The kind of theory that can help open educators is one that guides the improvement of the arts of teaching. This is perhaps as difficult a requirement as has ever been placed on theory development. Since a descriptive theory does of necessity, select a period of time and a sample of schools to establish its explanatory characteristics, it tends to lock in a new recipe if used as a guide. If open education is open to improvement it follows that its theory cannot be purely descriptive, because improvement must be guided by open (option-generating) principles, relative to the continuous flow of situations of present practice alone. The uses of normative or prescriptive theory in education are well described by Paul H. Hirst (Tibble, 1966:55) as follows:

> (i) It is the theory in which principles, stating what ought to be done in a range of practical activities, are formulated and justified.
>
> (ii) The theory is not itself an autonomous 'form' of knowledge or an autonomous discipline.... Many of its central questions are in fact moral questions of a particular level of generality, questions focused on educational practice.
>
> (iii) Educational theory is not a purely theoretical field of knowledge because of the formulation of principles for practice in which it issues. It is, however, composite in character in a way similar to such fields.
>
> (iv) Educational principles are justified entirely by direct appeal to knowledge from a variety of forms, scientific, philosophical, historical, etc.

The remainder of this article is an attempt to generate a context of principles to guide and defend open education as a viable alternative.

Rudiments of a Normative Theory for Open Education

What form should a theory of open education take? Dewey said, that education could be conceived of as the laboratory in which philosophical distinctions become concrete and are tested (1916). Therefore, the several areas of philosophy (i.e., metaphysics, epistemology, axiology, ethics, aesthetics, social or political philosophy, and logic) may be used as categories within which assumptions can be developed and from which action formulations can hopefully be deduced as a theory is refined more fully.

How can conclusions that guide action be deduced from assumptions about the nature of reality, epistemology, etc.? Many authors concur that educational decisions are, at their roots, ethical decisions. Yet, what is the relationship among factual and value assertions? William K. Frankena (1965) devised a scheme for structuring normative and descriptive claims and deriving concomitant prescriptions for action from them. It is, in fact, a scheme for making certain that both factual and value premises exist prior to deducing educational prescriptions. Frankena's model is presented in Figure 1.

Element A includes assertions from the realm of axiology, ethics, and social philosophy; B includes assertions from metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics; and logic is the tool whereby the elements are tied together. The philosophical terms under A and B are given broad enough connotation that they include scientific, developmental, and institutional contributions. Social context is given paramount consideration, and ethical assertions sometimes take on characteristics of contextual

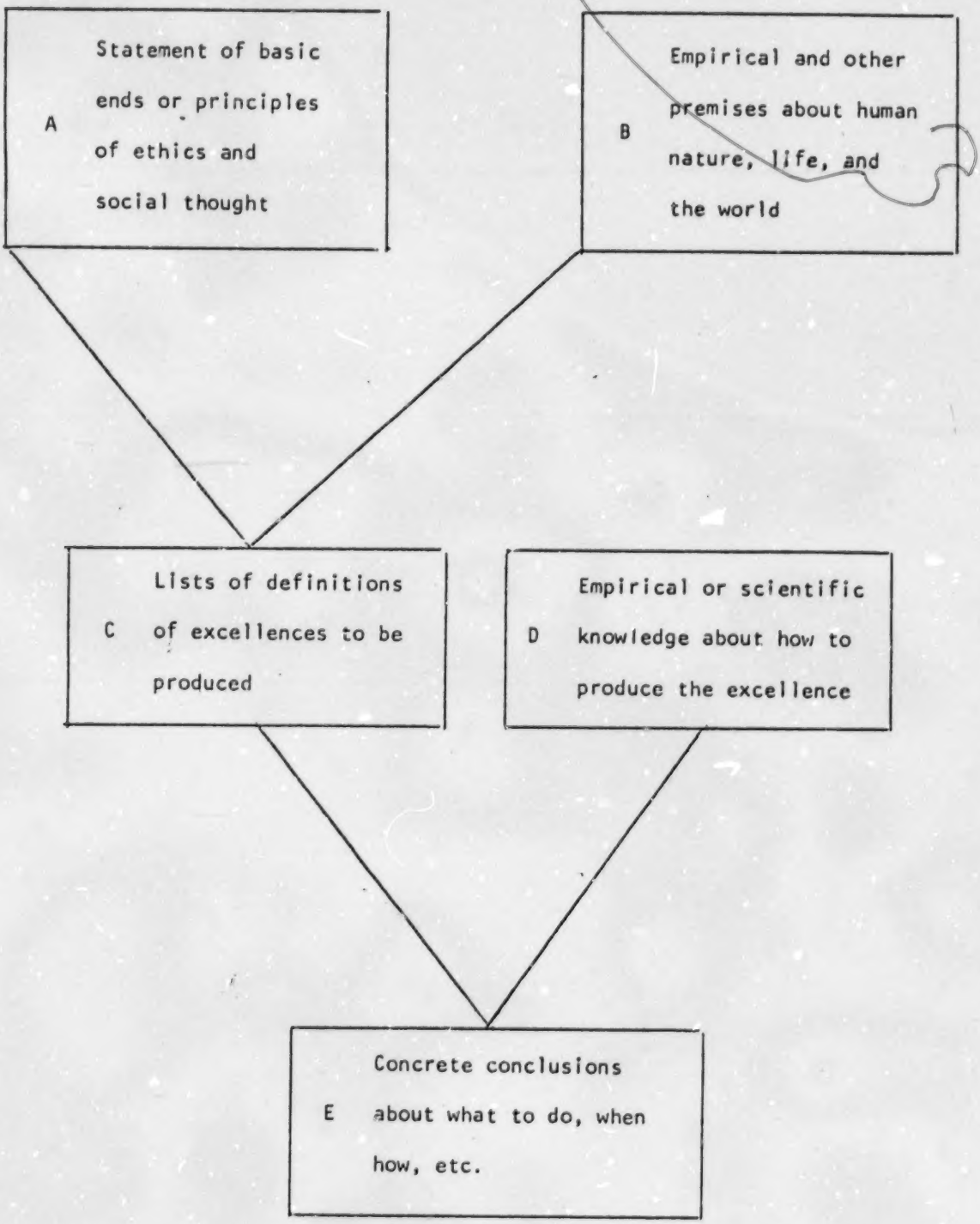
A
Statement of basic ends or principles of ethics and social thought
B
Empirical and other premises about human nature, life, and the world
C
Lists of definitions of excellences to be produced
D
Empirical or scientific knowledge about how to produce the excellence
E
Concrete conclusions about what to do, when how, etc.

Figure I

implication. "Excellences", C , are broadly conceived to include process (skills and abilities) as well as content (subject matter). D is again a matter of substantiated preference i.e., those methods or approaches which may be deemed as options available for obtaining C during decision making in E . Let us continue to use Frankena's model as a frame for discussing assumptions that are basic to open education. In doing so, historical and philosophical roots of current writing on open education will be explored.

Element A: Statement of basic ends or principles of ethics and social thought.

1. Ethics: The quest for what is good: Utopianist Robert Owen (Harrison, 1968) emphasized a rather straightforward, yet rather ambiguous assertion---that happiness is the end of education. Froebel (1887) saw the "unfolding" child as basically good, yet able to be corrupted by evil environmental influences. MacMillan (1904, 1919), Tolstoy (1967), and many of today's affectivist educators saw ethics and axiological questions as being at the very heart of educational concerns.

Dewey (1916, 1932, 1933, 1948), Mill (1861, 1931), Dearden (1968) and Polanyi (1964) made great contributions in this area. Although Polanyi is essentially an epistemologist, his epistemological position has particular implication for ethics. By maintaining that each person is an integral part of his knowledge, using the term "personal knowledge," he could not divorce ethics from the person and hold it irrelevant to epistemological considerations. Mill advanced the pleasure/pain ethic of Bentham to a greatest-good-for-the-greatest-number principle, a principle which he maintained should be considered relative to both long and short run effects.

Dewey offered a unique synthesis for transcending the objective/subjective dichotomy in ethical theory. By depicting a sort of "ideal decider" i.e., a person who could solve problems scientifically (1933, 1938), Dewey described characteristics of the ideal problem solver in several of his works. Rucker (Boydston, 1970) discussed the following standards for moral progress which can be gleaned from a careful reading of several of Dewey's ethical works. Although the standards seem vague at first sight, Dewey explicated them at some length. This, however, is not to say that clarification was achieved. Criteria of genuine interest include whole heartedness, impartiality, and energy. Criteria for a good moral agent are justice, temperance, and courage. These combined with the methods of problem solving (1933, 1939) or scientific methodology, constitute characteristics of an ideal decider. Dewey's ethics does not, however, end at this point. Good can only be determined in terms of the present. It is advantageous to understand (to have internalized) the characteristics of an ideal decider. But the actual good can only be determined relative to the consequences of action i.e., consequences as to whether the problem (broadly speaking i.e., including all of life's encounters) is solved for a given decision maker and in terms of the relative extent to which the consequences of action helped or hindered the growth (1916, pp. 41-53) of others affected by the action. Criteria for judging the consequences of action (relative to self and others include): harmony from strife, variety from monotony, and growth i.e., expansion (see Rucker again). Hence, the "ideal decider" element of Dewey's ethics is a set of prerequisite abilities which can be considered highly

probabilistic traits for eliciting good consequences. The real test of that which is good is in the actual consequences of action and the extent to which such consequences can be described as fitting the criteria of harmony, variety, and growth relative to both the individual decider and those influenced by his or her decision. Dewey's position transcends the ethical dualisms of objective and subjective, and absolute and relative.

Since each person is the final decider in his own situation, the ethics tends toward subjectivity; since criteria are involved, the ethics tends toward objectivity; since each decision is situational, the ethics tends to be relativistic; and since the decision made is the only one for that situation, it is a sort of absolute that can never again occur because any given situation will not be exactly duplicated.

Dewey's ethics is often criticized (e.g., Frankena, 1965; Karier, et al., 1973; Scheffler, 1973) for the very reason that it might hold its greatest potential. The most prevalent criticism goes something like this: "Dewey said that that which is good should be determined relative to the consequences of action but relative to what criteria?" The criteria for the ideal decider and for evaluation of consequences provide a general focus, but not a complete answer. It can still be maintained that the criteria offered are not precise enough to use for decision-making purposes. What might be the potential held by Dewey's ethics? Perhaps Dewey's ethical theory merely sets the parameters for ethical decisions. Though not nominally phenomenologistic, Dewey likely foresaw the idea of each person as a moral agent. Perhaps his intent was to build a context for that agent by providing a framework for ideal decision-making, and by

admonishing each person to project consequences of action relative to problem solutions and the social impact of those solutions. From that point onward, each person is alone, alone (but within social structures) to determine a good course of action in each given situation. Dewey may have provided a personalized ethical theory which required each person to be his (her) own moral agent. As Macdonald (1973, p.2) stated, "Thus, self-preservation becomes preservation of whatever fantasy of the 'good life' one holds." In short, it is assumed that each person, ergo, each child, is his own moral agent.

2. Social Thought: The quest for what is socially desirable: In utopian writings from Plato (Republic) to Owen (Harrison, 1968) to Illich (1971) attention is drawn to the contextual constraints of any given society on education. If educational programs are to be significantly changed, the society embodying them must also be changed; concomitantly, if the society is significantly altered so will be the educational system.

Traditionally, social philosophy has taken essentially three positions: 1) society exists to serve the individual; 2) the individual exists to serve society; and 3) society and the individual exist in a reciprocal relationship for mutual benefit (Dewey, 1948, p. 187).

Dewey's emphasis on experimental social philosophy (1948) goes one step further than that of Mill or other variations of the third position above. His position is closer to that of holding all three positions on a continuum, determining the tendency toward each which should be taken according to the exigencies of each situation. We cannot, he asserts,

use a generalized principle of social action (1948). This is the essence of Dewey's conception of democracy (1916, p. 101). A fully-functioning society according to Dewey is one in which all members function to their capacity, and one in which associations of persons continuously evolve in order to pursue common problems and interests. A result of his interpretation of democracy is, perhaps, designed to enhance the liberation of each individual's ability to initiate, plan, and achieve consequences consonant with ethical strivings. Here it is clear that the ethical and social are intimately intertwined. The essence of social prescription is more fully embodied in Dewey's writing than was interpreted by progressive educators who advocated a watered down type of consensus as described by Macdonald (1973) in an interpretation stimulated by Weinstein. Macdonald encourages a "liberation" ideology, one which engages members of a society in a process akin to Paulo Freire's concept of dialogue (1972) and productive work. Liberation, thus, is much more foreign to progressive educators generally than to Dewey's synthesis of the growth of both person and society (Dewey, 1916, Ch. 4-5). Such a synthesis is a viable base for the liberation sought by open educators.

Element B: Empirical and other premises about human nature, life, and the world.

I have selected the traditional philosophical areas of metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics to serve as a framework for these context building assumptions. Each of these areas will necessarily be extrapolated to include current sources of implications e.g., science , technology, etc.

1. Metaphysics: The quest for the nature of reality and humanity: What is the nature of reality, the world, and human life? I certainly

do not presume to answer these perennial questions which have gone unresolved by metaphysicians throughout the ages. Yet, some of the perennial concerns need exploration in the present endeavor because of their implications for open education. One of the underlying weaknesses of current open education practice and literature is the lack of explication of initial premises upon which it is bas[illegible] (Rogers, et al 1975).

Barth (1972) makes formidable strides in this direction, by delineating assumptions that he considers basic to open education. Yet, there is need to explicate sources more fully. Froebel posited a doctrine of unity which pertained firstly, to all that exists, and secondly, to a unity within each individual entity. Although Dewey rejects the importance of most metaphysical questions for practical affairs, his philosophy offers several positions which might more properly be considered an extension of the scientific toward a synthesis with the metaphysical. Dewey describes the universe as a continuous flow of experience. Thus, the idea of change is posited. Dewey views the person as an active part of the environment, not separate from it, and he attempts to overcome metaphysical dualisms, e.g., man and nature, mind and body (1948). Humans, according to Dewey, are biological organisms, i.e., a part of nature as intuited by Froebel and demonstrated by Darwin. As a person lives he acts, engaging in a continuous flow of transactions with his environment. These organism/environment transactions are viewed as problems to be solved, adaptations to be made. As each problem is solved the organism/environment gestalt is modified, re-constructed (1916, 1948). The person is guided through this process by a combination of habit, impulse, an[illegible]ligence (1922). Each person is, both a free agent and determined by his environment, free to choose, but

constrained by choices available and by his repertoire of previous choice which has become habituated, yet moved beyond such constraint by self-initiated or socially initiated impulse. Humans are (as would have been seconded by Owen, Froebel, Macmillan, and even Polanyi) social by nature, mutually dependent for self-preservation.

It is assumed by Dewey that the continuous flow of human experience is largely real as interpreted by our perceptions. Our assimilation mechanisms, our senses, process input that is relatively accurate to each person. It is similar enough among humans to be somewhat generalizable, but reality also retains a personal dimension which makes it situationally specific (Dewey and Bentley, 1949; Polanyi, 1964). Yet, even the most individualistic components undergo continuous processes of reconstruction. It is this continuous reconstruction which is essential to conceptions of reality, the world, and each human life that underlie open education as an open decision-making system.

2. Epistemology. The search for the nature of knowledge and the knowing process :

In order to extend this conception further it seems that the realm of epistemology directly follows. If we assume that reality is dependent upon experience for its personalistic definition, we may also assume that absolutism and universalism do not characterize a consistent epistemology. Two sorts of epistemological questions that have implications for open education evolve: First, what is the nature of knowledge? Second, how is knowledge acquired?

First, knowledge according to Dewey and Bentley (1949) and Polanyi (1964) is derived through continuous interaction among persons and their

environments. Thus, rather than ultimate truth, there are truths that are unique to personal situations. Knowledge is tentative, continually being reconstructed, and knowledge is functional i.e., instrumental to problem-solving.

Second, knowledge is acquired in the process of interest satisfaction. Interest satisfaction has high probability of being achieved when situational needs are defined, information is gathered, hypotheses are generated, and possible consequences are weighed--all of this in the continuous context of action. This is the method of inquiry (Dewey, 1933 and 1939). When considering children as being engaged in this process, one must come to grips with the developmental nature of knowledge acquisition. Piaget (Ginsburg, 1969) has elaborated developmental characteristics of the child's intellect. Kohlberg (1975) has attempted to do the same for moral development. Stages are thought to be largely irreversible; yet, decalage is thought to be quite prevalent. The organism is continuously involved in the process of knowledge acquistion by means of assimilation and accommodation which complement one another to bring adaptation. Adaptation is intertwined with organization of physical and psychological structures in an intrinsic effort to produce equilibrium. When considering the developmental nature of epistemological characteristics, one must take care not to substitute "ought" for "is," i.e., to become involved in unproductive uses of such knowledge, as pointed out by Dearden (1968, p. 45).

This combination of Dewey, Polanyi, and Piaget forms the basis of an interactionist epistemology (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972), an epistemology that offers both a philosophical position and a method for promoting further understanding of children. A method of continuous assessment of

one's environment from among all ways of knowing is the essence of Dewey's experimentalism (1948). An applicatory realization of this multidimensional epistemology is Piaget's clinical methodology. As an agent of his own learning the knower extends and expands his own uniqueness, thus becoming what existential (Morris, 1966) and some affective educators call a more "authentic" or "fully-functioning" person. Proponents of this position vehemently oppose attempts to separate the domains of learning (i.e., cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) in actual practice. Dewey's experimentally and democratically oriented interactionist epistemology provides a way out of "hard nosed" science by employing alternative ways of knowing. A great virtue of such an epistemology is that it is a means for checking and outgrowing its own inadequacies.

3. Aesthetics: The search for what is beautiful : The artistry of knowledge acquisition leads directly to considerations of aesthetics. Schubert (1975) Macmillan (1904), Tolstoy (1967), Dearden (1968, 133-152), and others discuss the aesthetic role of imagination and art in the increasingly complex quest to live more fully and productively. Dewey characterizes an artistic experience as one which combines memory of the past with anticipation of the future to form an achievement of the organism in the environment where it functions (1934). He holds that the quality of aesthetic experience should be judged according to the shared meaning it obtains for both creator and spectator. Both must be creative in relation to a given product of art. Aesthetic value is determined in terms of public and private consequences. That Dewey (1922) conceives of an emotion-laden impulse as a basic element of experience, provides further evidence of the dynamic interrelatedness of ethics, axiology, social philosophy, metaphysics, epistemology, and aesthetics.

Let us now formalize the positions advanced in our philosophic journey

and attempt to state basic tenents of open education.

Basic Tenets of Open Education and Their Derivation

Element C: List of definitions of excellences to be produced.

This phase of theory development involves the difficult process of combining ought and is premises from Elements A and B in an effort to clarify concluding dispositions for educational action. Although it may not be deemed logically "tight" enough to fit the traditional syllogistic model, allow me to usurp the form of that model, at least in a metaphorical sense.

It is noted from the outset that discussion of the term education is intentionally minimized in the previous discussion of A and B. This is done because of an attempt to remain consonant with Dewey's definition of education i.e., paraphrased as the continuous growth of each person as a contributor to and assimilator of the social consciousness of the human race (1916: Ch. 1). Schooling is deemed a microcosm of and a continuous process with education so defined. Thus, the contextual assumption for educators is that a combination of premises drawn from A and B can produce prescriptions for action in a quasi-logical fashion.

At this point it is beneficial to provide an interim summary of elements A and B of the theoretical base being developed. Although initial presumptions are normative in a normative theory, the assumptive contexts presented in A serve as the bases of "ought"; those under B are "is" components. Position B asserts that humans are active social beings engaged in a continuous flow of environment in an attempt to achieve a Piagetian equilibrium (Ginsburg, 1969). Knowledge is created through a process of organization and adaptation that can be characterized by a broad use of the term learning. In Deweyan style learning is

viewed as a continuous plethora of experience and reconstruction. Such a process provides the necessary habits, triggers the impulses, and fosters the reflective thoughts needed to effectively deal with the multifarious encounters of life (Dewey, 1922). Experience that is most effectively dealt with i.e., which combines past remembrance with future anticipation to meet present needs and interests, is aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1934). Element A asserts that the valuable is that which is deemed a good course of action to meet situational demands. Good consequences are assumed to have high probability of occurrence if characteristics of an ideal decider are employed (Rucker in Boydston 1970 and Dewey 1932). In the final analysis good consequences are determined in view of the harmony, variety, and expansion afforded to both the decider and the affected public. Thus, socially, that which fosters greatest individual growth also fosters greatest public growth (Dewey, 1927) and that which fosters greatest public growth also fosters greatest individual growth (Dewey 1948, and Dearden 1968). The maximization of both learning and ethical development is obtained when the person, responsible to the people, is seen as the primary agent of that development.

The following symbolic syllogisms are illustrative of prescriptions for action that can be derived to form C as a metaphoric consequence of premises drawn from A and B . The conclusions are offered as normative tenets of an open theory for open education.

A Humans ought to engage in dialogue in order to more fully benefit from the experience of others.

B Humans learn from experience and are the agents of their own learning.

C Open education learning experiences for each person should be determined through dialogue between the student, the teacher, and others influenced by the possible consequences of action.

A The goal of productive living ought to be achievement of good resolution of problems.

B Life is engagement in a continuous flow of environmental encounters i.e., Deweyan problems.

C Open education should consist of a large set of encounters to be solved in ways which the student, as moral, agent can grow in his capacity to meet these problems with both self and public good realized in the consequences.

A The maximazation of individual growth should enhance social growth.

B Knowledge has a personal component which gives it a uniqueness for each individual who creates it.

C The uniqueness of learning mode of each child, as well as similiarities among children, should be provided for and facilitated to the extent that it does not impinge on the right of any other child to pursue his own unique learning mode.

A A person should be free from environmental constraint in order to be increasingly better able to freely project the possible consequences of action.

B A person learns to cope with an increasing variety of experiences to the extent that he or she has opportunity to reconstruct habits, impulses,and reflective thoughts in a variety of situations.

C Open education should provide an enriched environment which both transmits the experience of the race and stimulates the potential means to improve that experience.

A Consequences are good when they meet individual as well as social needs.

B Growth is obtained developmentally.

C Consequences should enhance growth by being developmentally appropriate for children, individually and socially.

A Growth should evolve dignity and a feeling of worth.

B Growth accrues when the individual pursues problematic encounters in situations that are part of his flow of existence i.e., part of his life outside as well as within school.

C Open education should base its activities on the life activities of children; then educational activities will be purposeful and productive fosterers of dignity.

A Growth should be democratically pursued.

B Experience reconstructs the whole organism, and is fostered by the whole environment of that learner i.e., it brings growth.

C All persons in an open education environment should be actively engaged in the pursuit of growth at all domains e.g., cognitive, affective, social, psychomotor. This should involve a continuous

process of self-activated regrouping of students in educational settings (Dewey, 1916).

A Each person should enhance his capacity to project the possible consequences of action in light of private and public interests.

B Careful study is needed to be aware of the experience one reconstructs, both subsidiarily and focally (Polanyi, 1964).

C Discipline should be seen as arising from within the self, but it can be facilitated by social influence. This frequently takes the form of teacher direction in matters of impingement by one student on another.

A That which is deemed the good course of action (unless it meets social constraint because of impingement) should be pursued by the agent of morality and learning.

B That which is of greatest interest (baring intervention) is pursued by any given learning agent.

C Open education should begin where the child is i.e., begin with the psychological and lead to the logical (Dewey, 1916).

A Bringing harmony, variety, and expansion for individual and social units should be the goal of the consequences of action (Dewey, 1922).

B An aesthetic experience is achieved when memory of the past and anticipation of the future are united in current action (Dewey, 1934).

C The increased aesthetic pleasure of achieving consequences deemed worthy by children (the agents of their own learning and moral development) should be a primary goal of open education. It enhances

the growth of both the self and society.

A The society should take the responsibility to help its members exercise their potential to contribute to their own growth and to that of society.

B The experience from which children can obtain the shared experience of the human race and the capacity to engage in reflective thought is too vast and complex to obtain informally.

C The society should establish schools i.e., institutions designed as extensions of the home and community for the purpose of providing a microcosm of "inherited" resources of the race and for fostering the ability to become an increasingly competent moral and learning agent.

Element D: Empirical or scientific knowledge about how to produce the excellences.

This is the area of curriculum development and implementation, a relatively broad interpretation of that term. Salient questions of curriculum development as exemplified in major comprehensive treatments of curriculum development (e.g., Harap, 1928: Hopkins, 1929; Caswell and Campbell, 1936; Smith, Stanley, and Shores, 1957; Taba, 1962; Firth and Kimpston, 1973; Tanner and Tanner, 1975) might be summarized as follows:

1. How should objectives be determined?
2. How should content (experiences) be selected?
3. How should experiences be sequenced?
4. How should organizational plans be selected?
5. How should methodological approaches be determined?
6. How should relevance be determined?
7. How should evaluation be determined? (Shores, 1973).

These questions should not serve as a step-by-step recipe. They are separated only for analysis and explication. In practice they can be

conceived as the fibers of a web-like process which weave throughout and provide cohesion of the whole curriculum implementation process.

Cases for the various types of positions relative to each of these questions are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that: (1) such positions are numerous, (2) various sorts of research supports each position under certain conditions, and (3) children involved in open education are diagnosed and dealt with as persons in situations.

Given these three propositions, open educators, finding themselves working with different levels of students in different situations, need to view the positions on each curriculum development question as optional hypotheses. Supplementing the positions on curriculum development questions is the vast array of theories of and research on learning, personality development, anthropology, and institutional organization which might also be considered possible hypotheses for implementation. In the spirit of open education, as tentatively defined in the previous pages, it would seem to be the task of open educators to project the possible consequences of available hypotheses and, being their own moral and intellectual agents, determine the public good obtained by acting upon the hypothesis that best fulfills the needs of each situation encountered.

Element E: Concrete conclusions about what to do, when, how etc.

This element of the theory is at the very heart of the theory-practice question. Should open educators operate on specific prescriptions provided for them by curriculum developers and educational theorists, or should they develop a contextual understanding of the bases of open-education? Open education should be viewed as an art as well as a science because

pre-established prescriptions seldom fit the exact needs of existential situations. As such, open educators should help each child grow toward an actualization of a situationalized interpretation of the foregoing elements of the normative theory advanced. In order to do this effectively the educator should be prepared to study actual situations as described by Dewey:

> What is needed is intelligent examination of the consequences that are actually effected by inherited institutions and customs, in order that there may be intelligent consideration of the ways in which they are to be intentionally modified in behalf of generations of different consequences (1929, p. 273).

Such modifications are referred to as "the arts of eclectic" (1969, 1971) by Schwab. Open educators should be able to hold a great many hypotheses in readiness, being able to select those most appropriate in given situations. This is one art of eclectic. A second, and somewhat more difficult art of eclectic is that of being able to tailor the alternatives (e.g., theory, research findings, etc.) deemed most appropriate to meet situational needs. Finally, Schwab submitted an even more complex and creative art of eclectic, i.e., that of the anticipatory generation of alternatives to meet concrete situational needs (1969).

No more specific general recipe can be offered for this process than the characteristics of good decision-making, e.g., those suggested by Dewey. Thus, open education might be conceived as more than an ideology for a particular brand of schooling. It offers a way of decision-making, perhaps a way of life, for the open educator as well as the open educated, to obtain a more intelligent life-long process of learning and living.

To these ends Schubert suggests three overarching decision-making elements to be used in tailoring general curricular decisions to situational needs. These include: (1) a cognizance of defensible assumptions used in the building of curriculum purposes; (2) the projection of an array of possible courses of action to meet situational demands; (3) the projection of probable consequences (focal and subsidiary effects) of intended and actual action on possibilities, as well as their consistency with assumptions (Schubert, 1975).

In summary, then, open education is viewed here as a kind of flexible-personalized type of teaching, a style of teaching that is based on the assumption that no one approach is best. That which is best can only be determined in light of specific situations. Such situational decision-making can, of course, be guided by overarching theoretical preferences as delineated above. The soul of open education, beyond that, resides in educators who are committed to a Deweyan action-inquiry; that is:

> It is the essence of creative action-inquiry...that is needed to inspire a significant move beyond current approaches...that flows to meet the changing needs of students as persons (Schubert, 1977 pp. 552).

Concluding Statement

The systematization of past sources offers considerable guidance for open education; it offers a normative base for defensible direction. The present and future hold the potential for continuous refinement and actualization of that direction. Progress toward this end cannot ensue without continued commitment and action on the part of those who are dedicated to the spirit of open education. Creating open-space architecture, letting students pursue

every whim, and utilizing affective gimmicks are as far from this spirit as are skills management systems and Dick, Jane, and Spot. If those who are committed to the spirit of open education desire to sustain it in a day of accountability pressures, they must be accountable in their own terms. Their stance is at least as defensible as any other. It remains for them to act and defend the tenets upon which they act.

Nevertheless, the teacher whose conviction tells her/him to act on the normative base advanced above is bound to ask more. Just what is involved in the spirit of action/inquiry advocated above? Since teaching requires spontaneous action and occurs in irretrievable situations, no complete response can be offered. Yet something, albeit incomplete, must be offered. Given this, the following dialogue is offered as a partial next step -- a further exploration of what open education might mean.

WHAT ELSE CAN BE SAID ABOUT OPEN EDUCATION?

BEYOND RULE — TOWARD BEING . . . BEYOND PARADIGM — TOWARD SHIFTING PARADIGMS

Note: There is a tacit dimension (Polanyi, 1964) of dialogue in the question itself. As a scholarly form of presentation the dialogue is certainly not without precedent. To wit, there was Plato, a great exemplar.

Characters: Questioner
Open Educator

Questioner: I have read Schubert's "Toward, Toward a Theory for Open Education." I have read Dewey, Froebel, Macdonald, MacMillan, Piaget, as well as the other sources which you mentioned to me, and still you say that there is more. I don't understand; what else is there?

Open Educator: There is the "deep structure" of open education, a Chomskyan metaphor developed for understanding open education by Spodek (Spodek and Walberg, 1975, pp. 9-10).

Questioner: What is your interpretation of the deep structure of Open Education? What could be deeper than statements of ideology? Perhaps, further clarified ideology?

Open Educator: Certainly, further clarification is needed, but I see another dimension. It is Open Education as a way of being.

Questioner: What on earth do you mean?

Open Educator: Two points: 1) The spirit of the movement; and 2) The idiosyncrasies of the existential context.

Questioner: Let's take them one at a time. What do you mean by the spirit?

Open Educator: What is an ideology if it is not informed in persons, actualized inside open educators? The actualization is practically inseparable from the ideology. It is the ideology informed.

Remember Plato's "Alegory of the Cave?" (The Republic, Book VII) Let us consider it for purposes of explication. Remember the four epistemological levels? Let us look at them relative to Open Education.

1. Level of the shadows — dream-like appearances, reality hazily. This is the gimmick version of Open Education, the open-architecture, the "something" to plug in for variety, the programmed individualization.

2. Level of concrete observation — this is what can be seen to happen, both descriptions of and commentary about particular situations (e.g., Silberman's Open Classroom Reader 1973 , Dennison's Lives of Children 1969 , Kohl's 36 Children 1969 , etc.) and analytic classification schemes (e.g., Walberg and Thomas 1971 , Bussis and Chittenden 1970 , etc.) This may be seen as a rather sophisticated version of surface structure.

3. The level of hypothetical entities, i.e., constructs: Here would fall systems of ideology (e.g., "Toward, Toward a Theory for Open Education" and others).

4. Finally, the level of insight into the spirit of the forms. This is the level of actualizing the ideology — of an interactive epistemology (e.g., Polanyi 1964 Personal Knowledge, Dewey and Bentley 1949 Knowing and the Known, Phenix 1964 Realms of Meaning). But it is not merely talking or conceptualizing, i.e., the content, it is the process, the doing.

Questioner: It sounds plausible that this is a somewhat unexplored dimension of Open Education. But is there further substantiation in the literature? Has the notion of being been treated previously?

Open Educator: As evidenced by Lovejoy's Great Chain of Being (1936) it has been treated substantially in many realms. Samples include: Maslow's (1962) Toward a Psychology of Being; Montesquieu's (1949) Spirit of the Laws (a notion that would run quite beyond rule-governed conceptions of Open Education); Bergson's (1944) notion of elan vital in Creative Evolution; L. Hopkin's recent view of a similar "life force" neglected in education (1974); the human interest base of knowledge depicted by Jergen Habermas (1971).

Finally, I don't want to neglect mention of Cassidy's brillant book-essay, Knowledge, Experience and Action (1969) in which he saw the culmination of the three components (i.e., knowledge,

experience, and action) as the "perceiving eye", the "enlightened mind," and the "winnowed heart." It is the latter which I feel depicts the essence of Open Education, the spirit of the movement.

Questioner: Does this transcend the purpose of philosophy?

Open Educator: Not philosophy conceived as its root, love of wisdom . . . Not philosophy as interactive contemplation of the universe (Russell, 1959); and most assuredly not as the purpose was described by Ludwig Wittgenstein: " . . . to show the fly the way out of the fly bottle" (Mehta, 1962, introduction).

Questioner: Do you mean that the fly is analogous to the ideology, and that the ideology must be freed to run its course?

Open Educator: Indeed I do. It is as J. Bruner depicted in "After Dewey, What?" (Fiedler, 1974, pp. 182-194) One end of philosophy is action. Thus, Open Education can be viewed relative to prominent features derived from concrete observation through naturalistic and/or traditional empirical study. It can be productively analyzed by descriptive and prescriptive treatments of its assumptive bases. But no full understanding of it can be approached unless the "fly" of activity, that can only be static in its ideological "fly bottle," is allowed to act freely. . . . . continuously reconstructing its ideology to meet ever-changing situational needs.

Questioner: Let us return to the metaphoric syllogism which Schubert produced in "Toward, Toward a Theory for Open Education." Could you characterize the manner in which the tentative conclusions are different when they are informed or actualized in persons?

Open Educator: Let me attempt a few. What I will be doing is essentially describing an Open Education curriculum decision-maker, including teacher as decision-maker as pointed out by Louis J. Rubin (1971).

Think of these ideological elements: person as creator of knowledge, person as moral agent, developmental appropriateness, and dialogue.

1. An open educator who actualizes the idea that he is an interactor with environment, a cognitive map former (Broudy, Smith, Burnett, Democracy and Excellence 1964) by virtue of abstracting from experience, would be continually in the process of learning from experience. Torbert (1973) suggested that holding three elements in balance (awareness of internal -one's own- cognitive and emotional functioning, awareness of the effects of one's behavior, and awareness of the environment) maximizes learning from experience. An Open Education practitioner who approached this goal would, in a real sense, be continuously building his own theories of classroom functioning, curriculum, and education.

2. The person as a moral agent informed in the Open Education practitioner would imply continuous searching for the normative implications of the consequence of his actions. It might be said that he brought Stufflebeam's notions of evaluation of

context, input, process, and product into a continuous actualization (1969).

3. The notion of developmental appropriateness, in an actualized form brings to mind Piaget as it would in ideological considerations, but in present consideration not so much for purposes of his discoveries as for his process of discovering. Realistically, we cannot say with Walt Whitman that we just have to create great persons and the rest will follow; but we can realistically hope that the Open Education implementor can actualize levels of perception and conceptualization that are in the spirit of Piagetian clinical research. This implies educators who continuously search for that which is "developmentally appropriate" within the continuous flow of situations encountered.

4. The idea of dialogue can lead to a great deal. It can generate the worth-perceiving of a Paulo Friere (1972) and a type of "personal autonomy based on reason" (Dearden, 1964) which realizes the correlative relationship of both the individual first (e.g., Rousseau) and the society first (e.g., Hobbes). Dialogue can elicit the realization through mutual understanding, that maximization of the society and individual can be fairly well sustained when the individual is free to pursue "personal autonomy based on reason" to the extent that he does not impinge on the right of others to engage in that same pursuit. Dewey (Ulich, 3000 Years of Educational Wisdom, 1954, p. 638) said that the great unwritten chapter in the

story of evolution is the evolution of environments. It may well be that through dialogue the "public" in the environment can evolve.

Questioner: What about your second part of being, i.e., the idiosyncrasies of the shimmering uncertainty of the educational encounter? Are there ways in which "handles" can be obtained for engaging in dialogue, moral decision, interactive learning, and determining developmental appropriateness?

Open Educator: I think so, but nothing can substitute for increased competence in problem-solving. But this problem leads us more fully into the question of how to study and at the same time causes us to treat the problem of idiosyncrasies.

The issue of how to study is essentially an epistemological question — How do we know? The notion of paradigm is well known, since Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1970). I suggest that we need to evolve an open paradigm which syncretizes with the idea of systematic relativism advocated by Cohen (1939) and enables us to shift paradigms relative to the character of problematic situations. As McKeon (1952) said there is no metaphysics except a metaphysics of knowing, a set of metaphysical absolutes only as they evolve relative to the substrate of subject-matter-under-inquiry which a given pursuit of a given problem delimits from the subject matter-in-fact, i.e., all of reality.

Questioner: Please give an example of how this might work.

Open Educator: Skilbeck (Jenkins, 1972) developed a set of descriptors of the classic and romantic positions in educational history. They are as follows:

CLASSIC	ROMANTIC
structure	style
standards	expression
culture	subcultures
unity	diversity
rationality	experience
excellence	excellences

I like to view these as points toward the ends of continua, points at which the Open Education teacher could shift among relative to his/her analysis regarding how the ideology could best be fostered in the given existential situation.

Questioner: How can the gestalt of that situation be conceptualized?

Open Educator: What are its components? Schwab (1973) said they are curriculum decisions, teacher, milieu, student, and subject matter.

They might be conceptualized by asking this type of a question: Where on the continua would the growth of a given student, with a given teacher in a given milieu, under a given set of curriculum decisions, and functioning in a given type of subject matter experiences, be most enhanced relative to the ideology set forth?

Graphically, referring to the initials of each of the ends on Skilbeck's continua (top of the chart), and combining them with school's components of the educational situation (left side of chart) they appear as follows:

CLASSIC/ROMANTIC CONTINUA

Situational Components		S/S	S/E	C/SC	U/D	R/E	E/E
	Teacher						
	Student						
	Curriculum Decisions						
	Subject Matter						
	Milieu						

Questioner: I have a rather fundamental question about the relativist approach, the shifting paradigm approach as you label it. Isreal Scheffler (1973) asserted that Schwab's emphasis on eclectic (a sort of relativism) makes it possible to pursue the course of K. Popper's method of excluding falsifiable hypotheses, because a method which is falsifiable once might be chosen in another situation (Popper, 1959).

Open Educator: True, if a universal paradigm position is accepted; but we can keep Popper's principle but realize that exclusion is not for all time and all places, that exclusion must be done relative to each subject-matter-under inquiry. — It is a difficult task indeed, but I do not contend that the task of education is simple.

The problem is further compounded by Schwab (1959) in an analysis of Dewey. How does one communicate a new view? If, for example

one devises a new system of logic, and attempts to disprove the old system by using the new system, his view is rejected, because the new system is not accepted. If he tries to disprove the old system by using the old system he is rejected because he is supporting the utility of the old system. It is back to Plato's paradox of the Meno. How can one learn something unless one almost already knows it?

Questioner: Where now?

Open Educator: Toward Featherstone's (1974) admonition to pursue many modes of inquiry, to develop multifarious options for the pursuit of resolving problematic situations. This is, in a large sense, an actualization of the Macdonald/Weinstein notion of liberation (Macdonald, 1973). Let us search wide and far but let us sustain the check and balance of our findings with "disciplined inquiry" (e.g., Cronback and Suppes, 1969) in which persons with varieties of expertise cooperatively develop the character of the paradigm shift in given problematic situations.

Simultaneously, let us never lose sight of the life in classrooms that Philip Jackson (1968) so well portrays, particularly the cumulative effects of each of the millions of minutes experienced in educational environments. Each minute, taken singly, may seem trivial. Together, they help students become. Teachers and students should do well tc heed Kipling's advise,

offered in his poem "If," to

> '"fill the unforgiving minute with
> sixty seconds worth of distance
> run. . . .'"

With this as guide they should be able to move beyond rules toward being, and beyond paradigm toward shifting paradigms. They will then be in a better position to capture the educative potential of the elusive and situationally specific moment, and to act within it using a Deweyan form of intelligence.

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